

A4 10. (Once Amended) A pet treat according to claim 8 in which the fried body of the piece comprises layers of a thermally gelled matrix containing the protein and the starch.

11. (Once Amended) A pet treat according to claim 8 wherein the piece has a pH in the range from 4.5 to 5.2.

A5 14. (Once Amended) A process according to claim 12 including the step of introducing a preservative into the container.

15. (Once Amended) A process according to claim 12 including reducing the pH of the pieces to the range from 4.5 to 5.2.

16. (Once Amended) A process according to claim 12 wherein the step of frying is by using a flash frying process.

17. (Once Amended) A process according to claim 12 wherein the container is a sealable pouch.

A6 20. (Once Amended) A process according to claim 18 in which the thermally gelled matrix is formed into the layered, gelled matrix by heating the protein source and the starch source using mechanical energy in an emulsion mill and ejecting the heated mixture from the emulsion mill into a holding tube.

21. (Once Amended) A process according to claim 18 in which the pieces have a moisture content of about 50% to about 65% by weight prior to frying.

22. (Once Amended) A process according to any claim 18 in which the fried pieces have a moisture content of about 35% to about 50% by weight.

23. (Once Amended) A process according to claim 18 further comprising filling moisture into the retortable container with the fried pieces, sufficient moisture being provided to raise the moisture content of the fried pieces to that of the pieces prior to frying.

24. (Once Amended) A retorted pet treat comprising a retortable, sealed container and at least one piece of a formulated food product in the container, the piece having a moisture content of no less than 25% by weight and comprising a fried body of a thermally gelled matrix, the pet treat being produced by a process comprising:

thermally gelling a protein source and a starch source for providing a thermally gelled matrix;

forming the thermally gelled matrix into pieces;

flash frying the pieces for providing fried pieces; and

filling the pieces into a retortable container and retorting the container.

A7 27. (Once Amended) A pet treat according to claim 24 in which the fried body of the piece comprises layers of a thermally gelled matrix containing the protein and the starch.